

foundation, pour a new foundation, and relower the house on top of it—would at least be able to get a deduction under an IRS deduction provision that goes back decades, the property casualty loss provision, which was good news.

Unfortunately, in the tax bill which was signed into law by President Trump in December, one of its most boneheaded provisions actually narrowed the scope of the property casualty loss to only those property cases which happened in an area that has been declared a federally declared disaster, which, again, because this, so far, FEMA has ruled is as a result of a manmade product, concrete, does not qualify for that FEMA designation.

Thankfully, we have some outstanding people at the IRS, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury David Kautter, who, again, looked at the tax bill that was signed into law and basically issued the ruling on Tuesday that allows, at least for the next 3 years, homeowners to claim this deduction, again, using an amended return for 2017, as a way of getting the full benefit before the tax bill steps in in 2020 and eliminates this avenue of relief.

This was a provision which never belonged in the tax bill. It affects a much broader cross section of Americans, not just folks from homes with crumbling foundations who are not in declared disaster areas.

I know that members on the House Ways and Means Committee, particularly Congressman RICHIE NEAL, are very focused in terms of trying to fix this really harmful provision that provides almost zero tax savings to the Federal budget but causes huge harm to homeowners like the ones in Connecticut and western Massachusetts.

Again, Congressman NEAL, Congressman LARSON, and I have been working with the IRS over the last 19 months to get this safe harbor for homeowners to be able to get the benefit of this provision.

I want to thank the folks at IRS and Treasury for their ruling on Tuesday that at least allowed another 3-year window for people who are totally innocent victims who, because of the way insurance policies are structured, cannot, in most instances, get property casualty loss coverage for this type of loss to at least be able to soften the blow with this deduction.

Mr. Speaker, included in the bipartisan budget agreement which passed at 5 o'clock in the morning last Friday was a provision that did not receive a great deal of attention but actually will provide a great deal of relief, particularly for America's seniors. In particular, it reduced and narrowed the size of the doughnut hole for seniors who use the Medicare part D prescription drug program.

As many may recall, in 2003, when the Medicare prescription drug benefit was first created, it had a doughnut hole that basically said that seniors who signed up for Medicare part D

after \$2,000 of benefits for prescription drugs covered under the law would then have to pay a full 100 percent deductible until their prescription drug costs reached \$5,000. It was like buying a car, making a monthly payment, and then after 2,000 miles having to get out and walk for the next 3,000 miles until you again hit the trigger for the doughnut hole to kick back in for coverage.

When we passed the Affordable Care Act in 2010, we started the process of narrowing that doughnut hole, again, by 50 percent in year 1. It was again up to 35 percent in 2017, and the bill that passed on Friday night will actually do the final step to eliminate the doughnut hole entirely in 2019.

The really impressive part of that provision is that narrowing is not going to be paid for by the taxpayer. The pharmaceutical companies are the ones who will have to bear the brunt of narrowing that cost so that seniors will again have huge savings in the scope of thousands of dollars because of that provision.

Again, this is an example of where the bipartisan work that was done on that budget bill actually resulted in a very concrete, tangible benefit for America's seniors. I think that will be welcome news for those who are bearing the high cost of prescription drugs.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As we meditate on all the blessings of life, we especially pray for the blessing of peace in our lives and in our world. May Your special blessings be upon the Members of this assembly as they return from a long weekend in their home districts. Give them wisdom and charity, that they might work together for the common good.

May all that is done this day in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SCHNEIDER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF RON PARISH

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday morning, Ron Parish of Yorkville, Illinois, passed from the loving arms of his wife, Becky, into the open arms of Jesus.

Ron was a lifelong salesman whose career included RC Cola, Nabisco, McCormick spice company, and more. After he retired, he faithfully served our community's homeless at Kendall County PADS.

Ron's people skills served him well in business and in his relationships. He was always reaching out to friends and strangers alike. He would ask how they are doing, how he could help, and he was always pointing them to Jesus.

In fact, Ron and Becky introduced my family to their church, Harvest New Beginnings, and they were the very first to greet us on that God-ordained day 3 years ago when we first visited Harvest New Beginnings. It has become our home church.

Ron was 75 years old and is survived by Becky; two children, Ron, Jr., and Rhonda; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

I know you are smiling down on us now, Ron. Well done, good and faithful servant.

IMPROVE MONITORING OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

(Mr. SCHNEIDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, today, the heads of our intelligence agencies are testifying in the Senate with a unanimous and stark warning: Russia's meddling in 2016 was not an isolated incident, our midterm elections remain vulnerable, and Putin is targeting the 2018 elections.

"The United States is under attack," said Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats.

Russia's actions demand a serious response, both to hold our attackers accountable and to deter future interference. Remarkably, President Trump